

The monthly FEMA *Children & Disasters Newsletter* is a resource for youth preparedness practitioners, educators, parents, children, and teens. It shares timely research, examples of successful youth preparedness programs, safety tips, and resources related to youth preparedness. To subscribe to the *Children & Disasters Newsletter*, please visit www.ready.gov/youth-preparedness.

CHILDREN & DISASTERS NEWSLETTER



APRIL 2015 – ISSUE 4

Welcome to the April issue of the *Children and Disasters Newsletter*. April is a big month! Not only is it Earthquake Preparedness Month, but we're also celebrating the spring National PrepareAthon! Day on April 30th. In addition to details on these two great preparedness initiatives, the *Newsletter* includes information about two upcoming webinars and a Twitter chat, as well as a must-read article for those considering a career in emergency management. And that's not all! In this month's issue you will find:

- [PREPARE FOR A GREAT AMERICA'S PREPAREATHON!](#)
- [TEEN CERT: ENHANCING SCHOOL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT THROUGH YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND PREPAREDNESS \(WEBINAR\)](#)
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PREPARE FOR A GREAT AMERICA'S PREPAREATHON!

The April 30th National PrepareAthon! Day is quickly approaching, but there is still time to plan a preparedness activity. America's PrepareAthon! provides a great opportunity for individuals, organizations, and communities throughout the Nation to come together to prepare for specific hazards through drills, trainings, group discussions, and exercises.

The goal of the campaign is to increase the number of individuals who understand which disasters

could happen in their communities, know what to do to be safe and mitigate damage, take action to increase their preparedness, and participate in community resilience planning. Resources are available to help plan events, and these resources focus on six specific hazards: earthquake, flood, hurricane, tornado, wildfire, and winter storm.

Examples of potential National PrepareAthon! Day activities include:

- **Flood:** Discuss the components of an emergency kit during an after-school club meeting. If possible, have all youth assemble a kit during the event.
- **Hurricane:** Have children in a youth group identify evacuation routes in the community.
- **Tornado:** Check for access to wireless emergency alerts and encourage children and caretakers to register for local alerts and warnings, and/or download preparedness apps.
- **Wildfire:** Have parents and children work together to make a family communications plan.

To learn more about America's PrepareAthon! and to register your activity, please visit the [America's PrepareAthon! website](#). Also check out the [API Fact Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information. You can follow all the action on [PrepareAthon's Twitter feed](#).

TEEN CERT: ENHANCING SCHOOL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT THROUGH YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND PREPAREDNESS (WEBINAR)

After an emergency event, schools must sometimes wait for first responders to arrive. To equip students, staff, and schools with basic response skills and emergency preparedness concepts, FEMA established the Teen Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program to support high schools, which has been adapted from the adult CERT program.

On Thursday, May 14, 2015, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. EDT, the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center, on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS), and in conjunction with FEMA, will be hosting a webinar on Teen CERT and how schools may use it to engage youth in school emergency management planning and promote student preparedness.

This webinar will provide an overview of FEMA's Teen CERT program along with examples of how schools and districts are using Teen CERT to support their emergency preparedness and response efforts. Presenters include Mr. Dante Randazzo of FEMA's Individual and Community Preparedness Division and Ms. Susan Graves, Safety Coordinator of Oregon's Lincoln County School District.

To join this meeting, register in advance at <http://remstacenter.org/webinars/WebinarRegistration.aspx?WebinarID=66>.

DESIGNING SAFE SCHOOLS: PLANNING AND RETROFITTING FOR SAFETY IN EDUCATION FACILITIES (WEBINAR)

Each day, schools and school districts are responsible for providing a safe and healthy learning environment for students. Understanding how to design and maintain school buildings is an important part of supporting that environment. Mitigation, or the capabilities necessary to eliminate or reduce the loss of life and property damage by lessening the impact of an emergency, is just one way schools can work to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment, as outlined in [Presidential](#)

[Policy Directive 8](#), our Nation's approach to preparedness. Through planning and research, schools and school districts can work to understand how the safety of the school building directly impacts the health, safety, and educational experience of students and staff.

On Thursday, April 30, 2015, from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. EDT, the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS), with its Education Facilities Clearinghouse (EFC) and Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center, will celebrate [National PrepareAthon! Day](#) by hosting a webinar that provides insight on safety and security design and cost-effective features to consider for new construction of or retrofitting existing school buildings and grounds.

Recommended participants include school administrators, architects, construction managers, facilities managers, teachers, school administrators and staff, students, parents, and community members. To join the meeting, register at <http://remstacenter.org/webinars/WebinarRegistration.aspx?WebinarID=59>.

TWITTER CHAT: CALLING ALL STUDENT HEALTH VOLUNTEERS

Student volunteers can make valuable contributions to keeping their communities safe and healthy before, during, and after disasters—and their contributions benefit not only the community, but also the students themselves. Not only do student volunteers protect the resilience of their communities, they also gain valuable skills they might not learn from a textbook alone.

To encourage students in health professions to volunteer in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery efforts, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) is hosting a [Twitter chat](#) on April 21st from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. EDT.

Chat topics include:

- Why volunteering matters to students and how it helps both students and the community
- The best time to make the choice to volunteer and how volunteering before a disaster strikes makes the community healthier when disaster strikes
- Some common barriers to volunteering and how to overcome them
- What is unique about student volunteers and what special skills they bring to preparedness, response, and recovery programs
- Where young people can learn more about volunteering

Keep up with all the action on ASPR's [Twitter account](#), and remember to use hashtag #NHSSchat to join the discussion. We look forward to hearing from you on April 21st!

WHEN THE EARTH SHAKES: EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS MONTH

April is Earthquake Preparedness Month. This awareness month has been recognized since the April 1906 San Francisco earthquake and continues to be championed by preparedness organizations nationwide. While we know where high-risk earthquake areas are, at this point it is impossible to forecast when and where the next earthquake will occur. Without reliable earthquake predictors, it is very important that you and your family are prepared ahead of time. To best help individuals and communities prepare for the unexpected, FEMA developed an engaging, informative animated video that you can access by clicking the image above. Please take a look and be sure to follow the [FEMA YouTube channel](#) for all the latest emergency preparedness videos.



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: THE NEXT GENERATION



IS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT FOR ME?

By Alex Pasculle, Member Emeritus, FEMA Youth Preparedness Council

Over the past few months I have talked about emergency management-related trainings kids can take, activities they can do, and ways they can learn more about this potential career path. But how can they know if emergency management is something they want to devote their careers to? Below I have outlined some questions that both kids and adults can ask themselves to help decide whether they might be interested in a career in this field—and if so, what type of career.

Where do your interests lie? Is there something you are particularly passionate about? If you tailor your career to something you really care about, it will show in your work. For example, if you were deeply affected by a disaster and you enjoy working directly with people, you may want to work in a field that works closely with natural disaster survivors.

What is your comfort level in difficult and stressful situations? Emergency management is about preparing for and responding to the unexpected, which can be stressful. People in emergency response perform best when they can work well under pressure. That said, there are plenty of careers that focus primarily on non-response activities, such as mitigation or preparedness education.

What professional skills have you developed? Many of the skills you develop in school and other venues are applicable in professional environments. This could include things like communication skills or the ability to manage people. Think about where your abilities are most applicable. For example, if you have strong communication skills, you may like working with the press during a disaster. If you are good at managing people, you might enjoy leading a team of responders.

It might surprise you to learn just how many different types of careers exist in the emergency management realm. Check out this [list of FEMA leadership](#), which identifies all the different departments within FEMA and even includes biographies so you can see how different people ended up in the roles in which they currently serve. Now imagine all the different jobs not only at FEMA, but in states, counties, and cities throughout the country. See what I mean? There are so many skill sets that are applicable to emergency management!

COUNCIL CORNER: PREPARE YOUR NEIGHBORS

With the temperatures slowly creeping up, we're reminded of how spring is the perfect season for spending time outdoors—gardening, picnicking, and reconnecting with neighbors after months of hiding indoors. With this in mind, we posed the following question to the FEMA Youth Preparedness Council last month:

If you could distribute one preparedness item door-to-door around your neighborhood, what would you give to your neighbors?

Here are some of their answers:

"The one preparedness item I would distribute door-to-door would be compressible blankets. As simple as it sounds, disasters can happen at any time, including at night. While we may not need food or water right away, staying warm is important and this item can serve a great purpose."

Navjot Hansra, Region IX



"I think fire extinguishers are very important for the kitchen/home and that is something that I could hand out. So many people look over this simple piece of equipment that could easily save their house or even life."

Austin Witt, Region VII

"If I could distribute one thing to neighbors, I would give them a flashlight. It is something you could easily pick up at the dollar store, but it is very useful in the long run."

Sahara Duncan, Region III



"I would distribute a hand crank radio. Many underestimate the usefulness of a radio, but it is important to stay informed during an emergency and this radio is a tool that is still functional even when power lines are down and Wi-Fi is scarce."

Bridget Smith, Region I

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Disclaimer: The reader recognizes that the federal government provides links and informational data on various disaster preparedness resources and events and does not endorse any non-federal events, entities, organizations, services or products. Please let us know about other events and services related to youth preparedness that could be included in future newsletters by contacting FEMA-Youth-Preparedness@fema.dhs.gov.

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